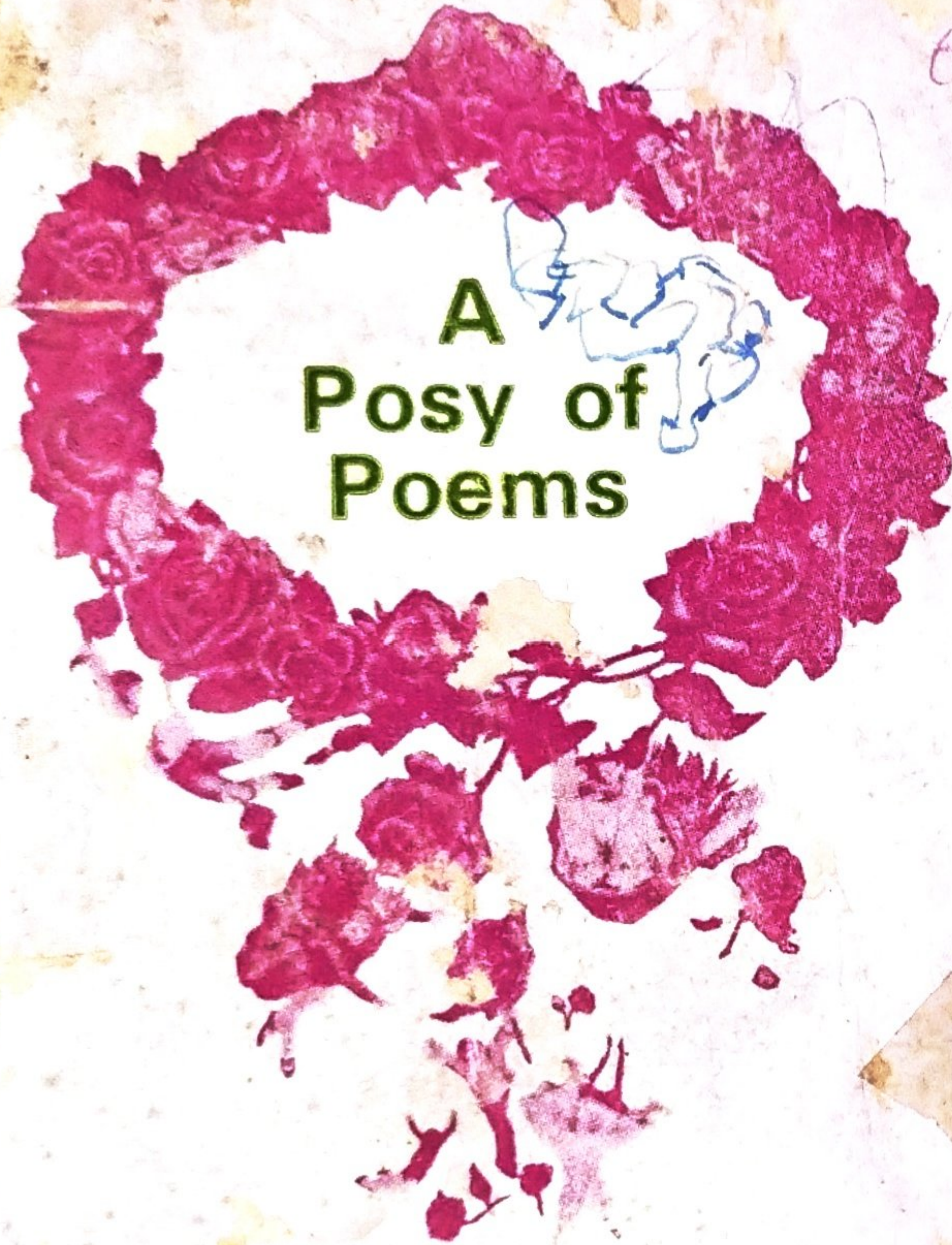
A Posy of Poems



Book 7

UKUL PRAKASHAN
J-2 Kailash Colony
New Delhi-110048

a posy of poems

BOOK-7

Selected by Doris M. Barrow M. Rachhpal

MUKUL PRAKASHAN

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New Delhi-110019

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PREFACE

In choosing the poems for the different age-levels, care has been taken to select such poems which would appeal to the imagination and interests of the children; which reflect their thoughts and dreams and which essentially they will enjoy.

Poems have also been included which express the experiences and thoughts of adults 'in memorable speech' but which are easily understood by and are interesting to children. An attempt has been made, wherever possible, to include English verse written by Indians and which have relevance to the Indian environment.

It must be remembered that the tastes and comprehension of individual children vary and this factor has also been taken into consideration in selecting the poems.

A word to teachers: Poetry when mastered is better *heard* than *read.*

We are indebted to Mrs Rajni Kumar, Principal, Springdales School, New Delhi for revising the series and to the Principal and staff of the Carmel Convent, Chandigarh and Mrs. Sanyal of the Delhi Public School, Delhi for their suggestions.

M.R.
D.M.B.

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Messrs William Heinemann Ltd for *Indian Weavers* by Sarojini Naidu; Messrs Macmillan & Co Ltd and the Tagore Estate for *The Further Bank* by Rabindranath Tagore; Shri Harindranath Chattopadhyaya for *The Owl's Grammar.*

In case of a few poems, the publisner could not trace the owners of copyright and could not therefore contact them. He hopes to do so soon.

CONTENTS

1 THE BOY

Is it, I wonder, a rum[1] thing,
Or nothing to wonder upon,
That whenever a man's doing something
There's always a boy looking on?

If he's mending a road or a motor,
If he's lending a crane or a van,
If he's tinkering[2] at an old boat or
A boot, there's a boy near the man.

If he's climbing a tree or a steeple,
Or shoeing a horse to the joy
Of a number of on-looking people,
You'll find at his elbow a boy.

If he's wrecking a house, if he's rubbing
A window or building a wall,
Unmoving, unmoved, and past snubbing,[3]
There's a boy in the forefront of all.

If he's doing odd things with the drainpipes,
If he's pouring hot tar on the street,
Or playing about with the main pipes,
There's a boy almost under his feet.

He may stand for hours like a dumb thing,
But this can be counted upon—
Wherever a man's doing something
There's always a boy—looking on.

1. odd, queer. 2. try to repair something in an inexpert way. 3. contempt.



2 THE FURTHER BANK

I long to go over there to the further bank of the river,
Where those boats are tied to the bamboo poles in a line;
Where men cross over in their boats in the morning with ploughs on their shoulders to till their far-away field;
Where the cowherds make their lowing cattle swim across to the riverside pasture;
Whence they all come back home in the evening leaving the jackals to howl in the island overgrown with weeds.
Mother, if you don't mind, I should like to become the boatman of the ferry when I am grown up.

They say there are strange pools hidden behind that high bank.
Where flocks of wild ducks come when the rains are over,
And thick reeds grow round the margins where water-birds lay their eggs;

Where snipes with their dancing tails stamp their tiny footprints upon clean soft mud;
Where in the evening the tall grasses crested with white flowers invite the moonbeam to float upon their waves.
Mother, if you don't mind, I should like to become the boatman of the ferry when I am grown up.

I shall cross and cross back from bank to bank,
And all the boys and girls of the village will wonder at me while they are bathing.
When the sun climbs the mid sky and morning wears on to noon,
I shall come running to you, saying, 'Mother, I am hungry !'
When the day is done and the shadows cower under the trees, I shall come back in the dusk.
I shall never go away from you into the town to work like father.
Mother, if you don't mind, I should like to become the boat man of the ferry when I am grown up.

Rabindranath Tagore

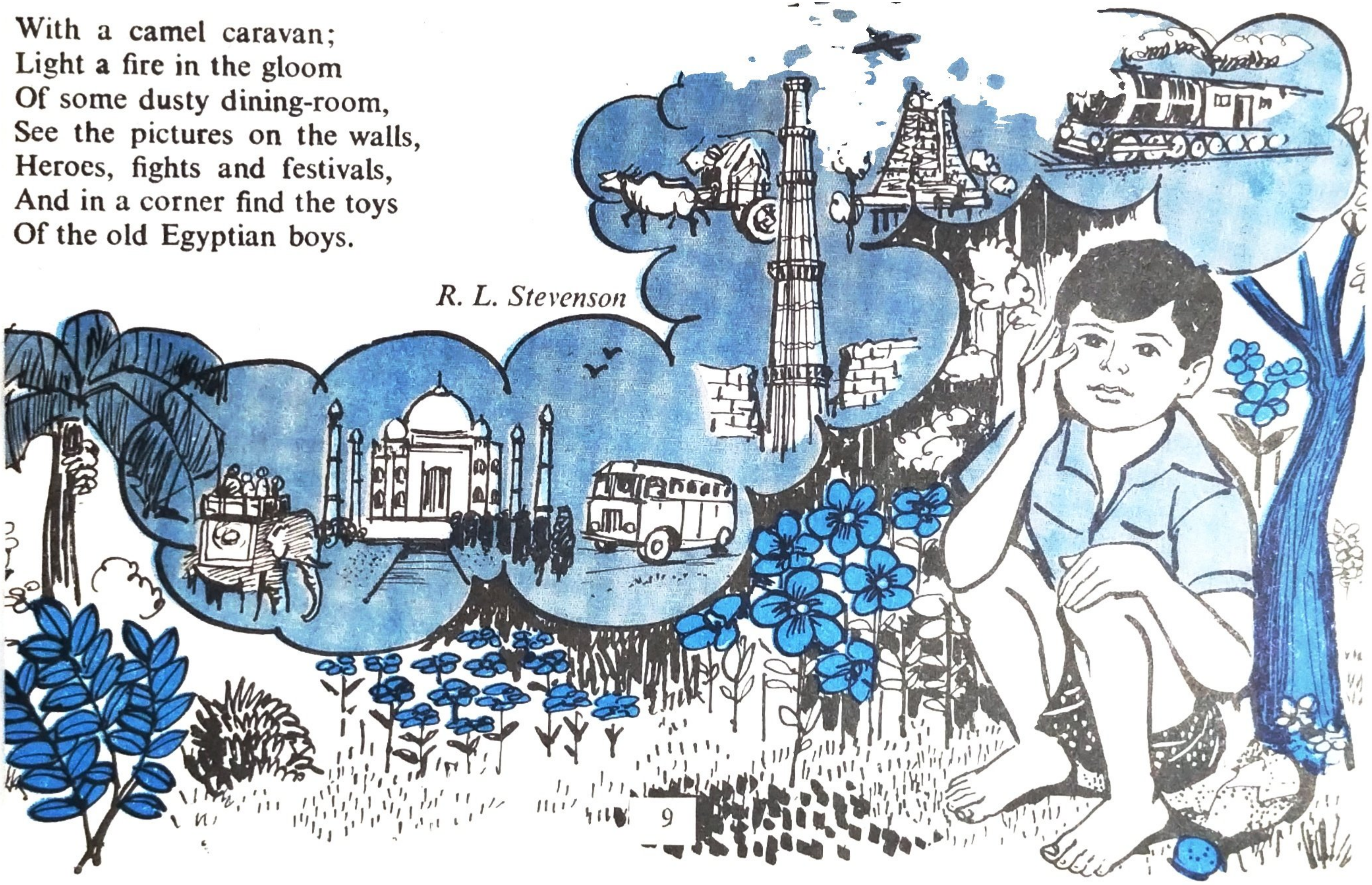


3 TRAVEL

I should like to rise and go
Where the golden apples grow;-
Where below another sky,
Parrot Islands anchored lie
And watched by cockatoos and goats,
Lonely Crusoes building boats;-
Where in sunshine reaching out
Eastern cities, miles about
Are with mosque and minaret
Among sandy gardens set,
And the rich goods from near and far
Hang for sale in the bazar;-
Where the Great Wall round China goes,
And on one side the desert blows,
And with bell and voice, and drum,
Cities on the other hum;-
Where are forests hot as fire,
Wide as England, tall as a spire,
Full of apes and cocoa-nuts
And the negro hunters' huts;-
Where the knotty crocodile
Lies and blinks in the Nile,
And the red flamingo flies
Hunting fish before his eyes;-
Where in jungles, near and far,
Man-devouring tigers are,
Lying close and giving ear
Lest the hunt be drawing near,
Or a comer-nu be seen
Swinging in a palanquin;-
Where among the desert sands
Some deserted city stands,
All its children, sweep and prince,
Grown to manhood ages since,
Not a foot on street or house,
Not a stir of child or mouse
And then kindly falls the night,
In all the town no spark of light.
There I'll come when I'm a man

With a camel caravan;
Light a fire in the gloom
Of some dusty dining-room,
See the pictures on the walls,
Heroes, fights and festivals,
And in a corner find the toys
Of the old Egyptian boys.

R. L. Stevenson



4 THE MAGIC STORE

I know where there's a magic store
With a hundred counters—may be more.
You'd never believe what bargains there;
For a song you can get a silver star.
You can wander down the aisles and buy
A pine tree etched on a sunset sky,
A velvet night with a shining moon
Or if you prefer it, a golden noon.
You can purchase a sky of azure blue
With fleecy clouds all woven through.
Right and left, you are sure to pass
Carpets made to flowers and grass.
Counters there are with treasures rare,
Solid things or fragile ware.
All for you is this rich display
Constantly changed by night and day.
Choose for yourself whatever it be,
A daisy field or a wind-blown tree.



A quiet pool or a singing stream,
A purple dusk or a rosy dream.
Come to the magic shop and buy !
All you need is the seeing eye.
Life keeps this store for you and me,
And the best of it all—these things are free

Mary S. Edg

5 TO DAFFODILS

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon :
As yet the early rising Sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.
We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a Spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

Robert Herrick

6. INDIAN SPRING

Pink are the young leaves,
    Bright and cool
As the quiet waters
    Of a jungle pool.

Loud calls the Koel
    From the tree
At dawn and in the sunlight
    And at dusk calls he.

Peasants plough slowly
    Earth's parched crust
Tilling the soil
    Ere green blades thrust.

Rain cascades earthwards,
    Wild winds sing.
Bold and fierce yet lovely
    Is the Indian Spring.



Jean Hughes

7 TO BLOSSOMS

Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast ?
Your date is not so past,
But you may stay yet here awhile
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.

What, were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid goodnight ?
'Twas pity Nature brought ye forth
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave :
And after they have shown their pride
Like you, awhile, they glide
Into the grave.

Robert Herrick



8 THE DAFFODILS

I wander'd lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A Poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought;



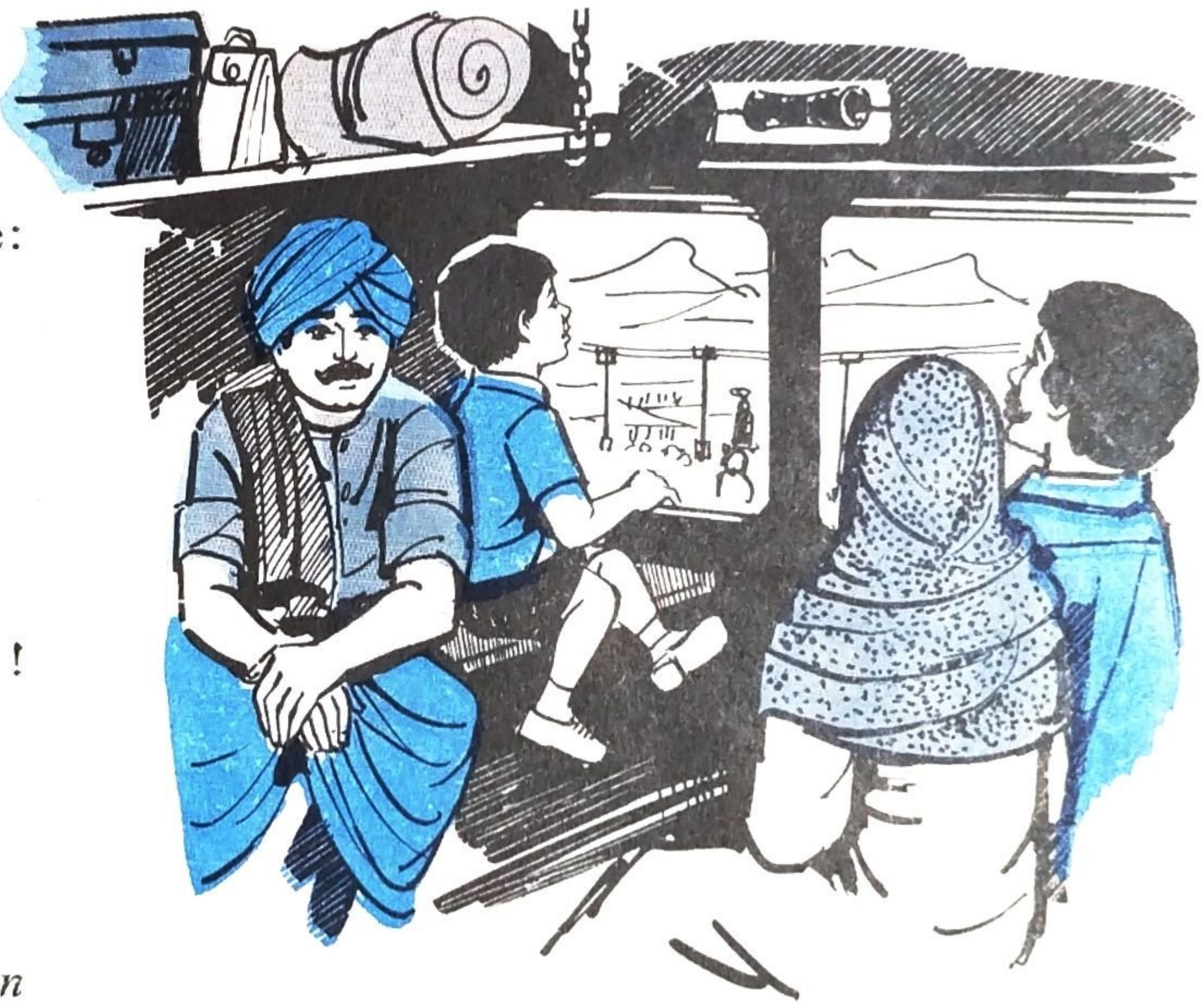
For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth

9 THE WORLD FROM A RAILWAY CARRIAGE

Faster than fairies, faster than witches
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches.
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:
All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.
Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And there is the green for stringing the daisies !
Here is a cart run away in the road,
Lumping along with man and load;
And here is a mill and there is a river :
Each a glimpse and gone for ever.

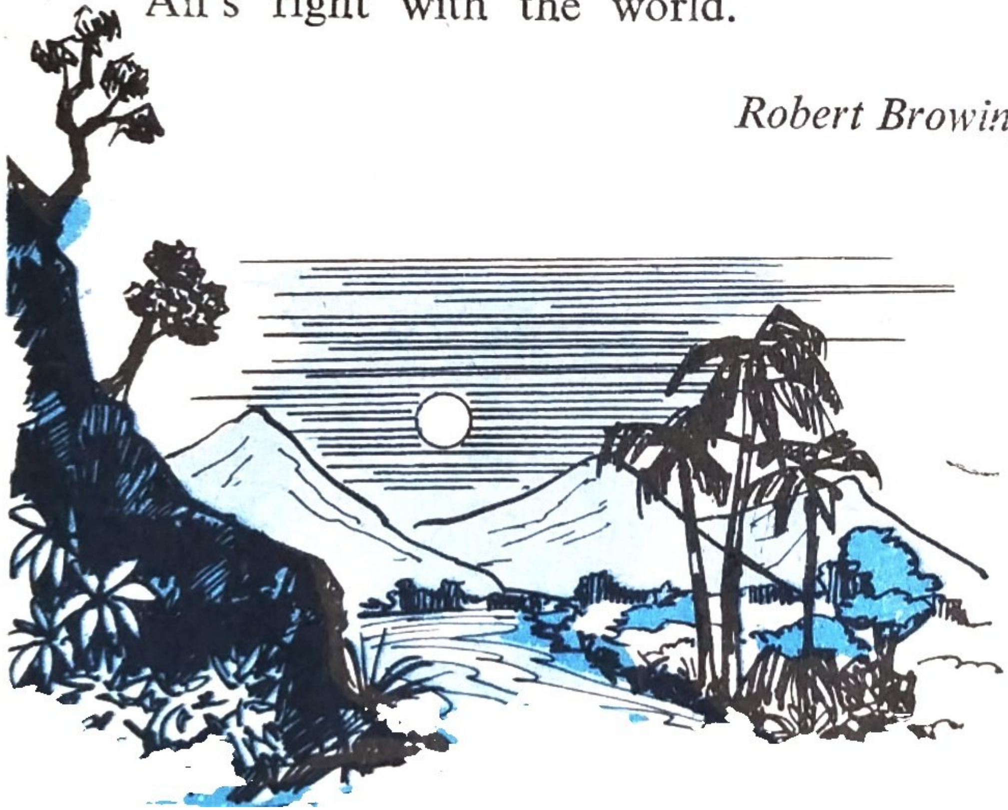
R. L. Stevenson



10 PIPPA'S SONG

The year's at the Spring
The day's at the morn
Morning's at seven
The hillside's dew-pearled.
The lark's on the wing
The snail's on the thorn
God's in his heaven
All's right with the world.

Robert Browing





11 THE WIND

I can get through a doorway without any
And strip the leaves from the great oak tre
I can drive storm-clouds and shake tall to
Or steal through a garden and not wake

Seas I can move and ships I can sink;
I can carry a house-top or the scent of a p
When I am angry I can rave and riot;
And when I am spent, I lie quiet as quie

James Re

12 THE OWL CRITIC

'Who stuffed that white owl?' No one spoke in the shop:
The barber was busy, and he couldn't stop;
The customers, waiting their turns, were all reading
The daily, The Herald, The Post, little heeding
The young man who blurted out such a blunt question;
Not one raised his head, or even made a suggestion;
And the barber kept on shaving.
'Don't you see Mister Brown,'
Cried the youth, with a frown,
'How wrong the whole thing is,
How preposterous each wing is,
How flattened the head is,
how jammed down the neck is—
In short, the whole owl, what an ignorant wreck 'tis?
I make no apology;
I've learnt owl-ecology;[1]
I've passed days and nights in a hundred collections,
And cannot be blinded to any deflections
Arising from unskilful fingers that fail

1. Branch of biology that deals with the habit of living things especially their relation to their surroundings

To stuff a bird right, from his beak to his tail
Mister Brown! Mister Brown!
Do take the bird down,
Or you'll soon be the laughing-stock all over town!'
And the barber kept on shaving.
'I've studied owls,
And other night fowls,
And I tell you
What I know to be true:
An owl cannot roost
With his limbs so unloosed,

No owl in this world
Ever had his claws curled,
Ever had his legs slanted,
Ever had his bill canted,
Ever had his neck screwed
Into that attitude.
He can't do it, because
'Tis against all bird-laws.
Anatomy[2] teaches,
Ornithology[3] preaches
An owl has a toe
That can't turn out so!
I've made the white owl my study for years,
And to see such a job almost moves me to tears!
Mister Brown, I'm amazed

2. Science of the structure of animal bodies
3. Scientific study of birds

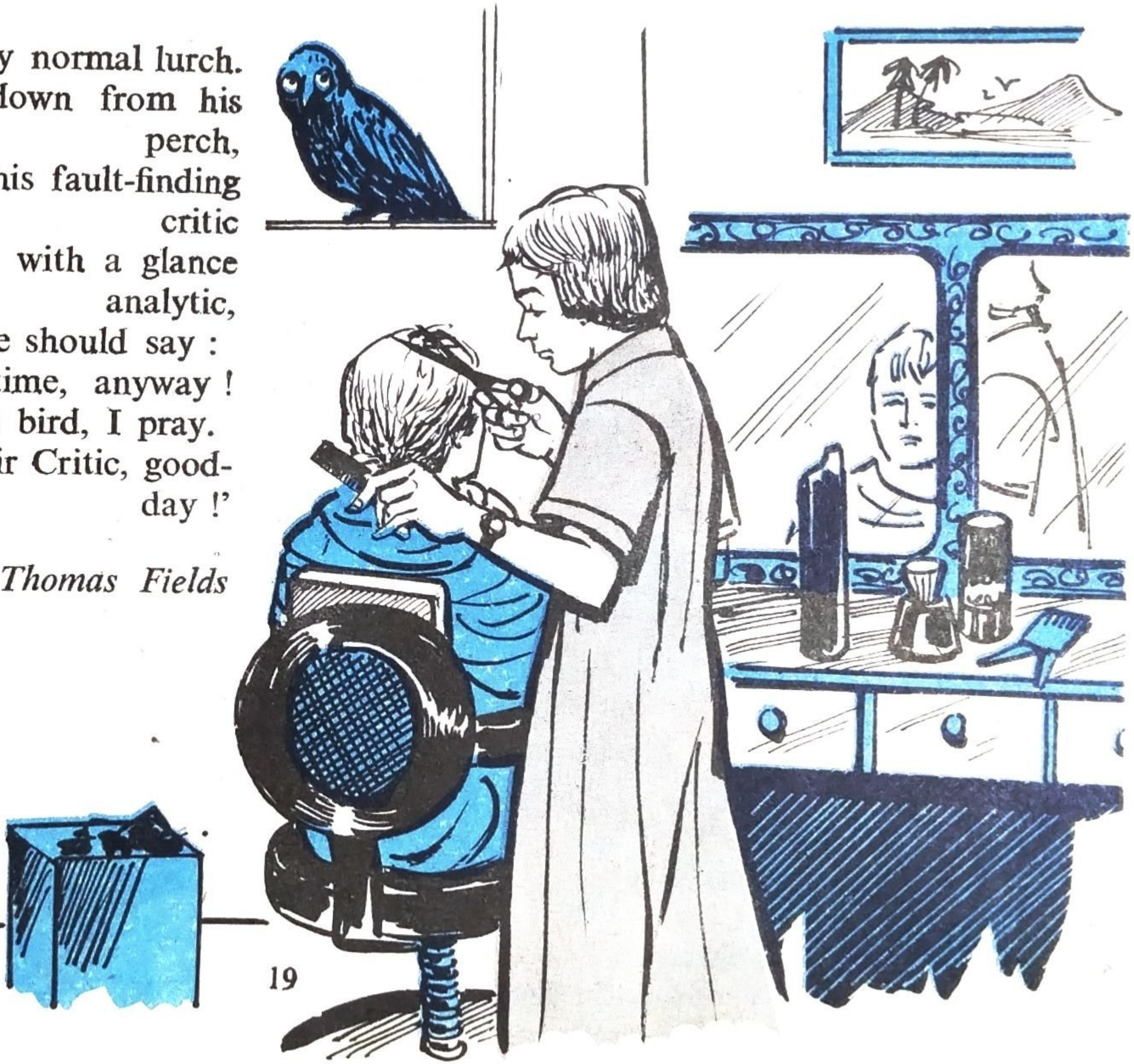
You should be so gone crazed
As to put up a bird
In the posture absurd!
To look at that owl really brings on a dizziness;
The man who stuffed him don't half know his business!'
And the barber kept on shaving.

'Examine those eyes.
I'm filled with surprise
Taxidermists[4] should pass
Off on you such poor glass;
So unnatural they seem
They'd make Audubon scream,
And John Burroughs laugh
To encounter such chaff.
Do take that bird down;
Have him stuffed again, Brown!'
And the barber kept on sha-
'With some sawdust and bark
I could stuff in the dark
An owl better than that
I could make an old hat
Look more like an owl
Than that horrid fowl
Stuck up there so stiff like a side of coarse lea-
In fact, about him there's not one natur-
feath-

4. Persons who prepare and stuff the skins of animals, bir-
fish so that they look as they did when living

Just then, with a wink and a sly normal lurch.
The owl, very gravely, got down from his perch,
Walked round, and regarded his fault-finding critic
(Who thought he was stuffed) with a glance analytic,
And then fairly hooted as if he should say :
'Your learning's at fault this time, anyway !
Don't waste it again on a live bird, I pray.
I'm an owl; you're another. Sir Critic, good-day !'

James Thomas Fields





13 THE OWL'S GRAMMAR

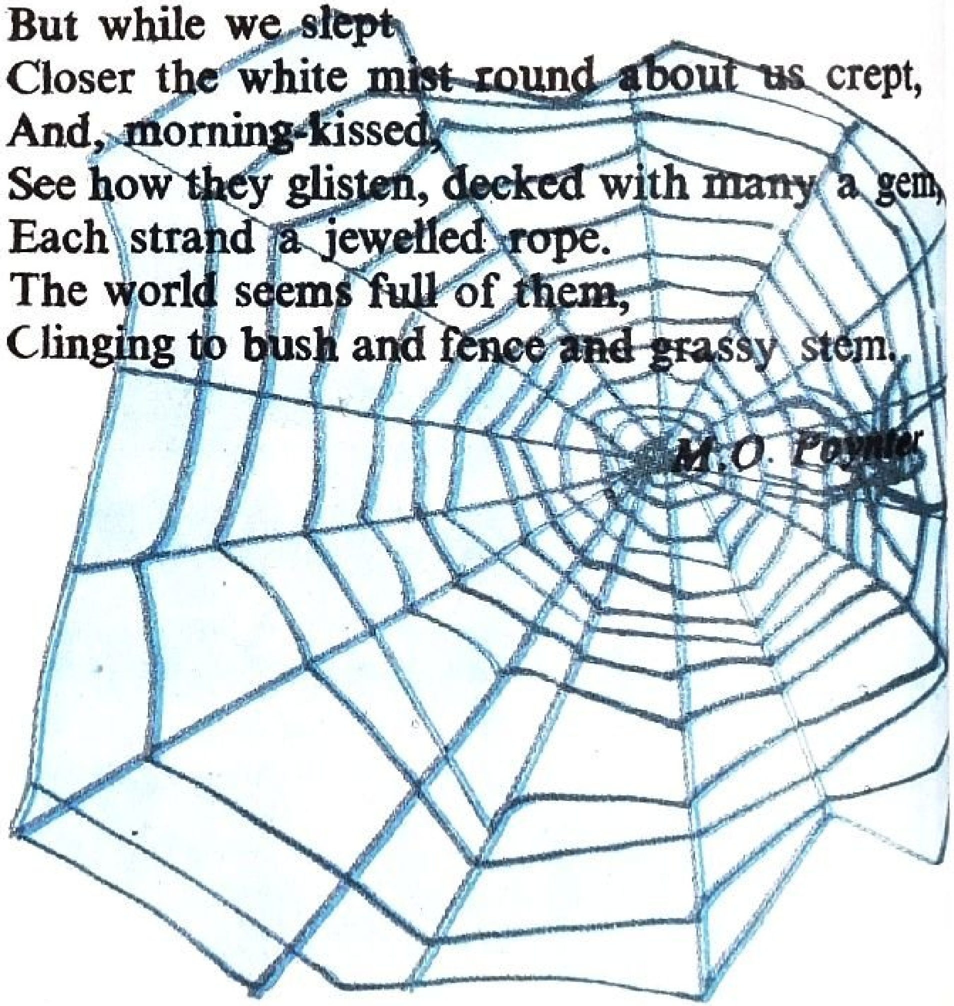
A little boy thought he would give the owl
A lesson in High School grammar :
'To whom,' said the boy. 'To-whoooo !'
said the Owl,
In an owly-wowly stammer.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

14 SPIDERS' WEBS

All yesterday
They hung but phantom things, unnoticed grey,
Under grey skies, forerunner of night mist.
But while we slept
Closer the white mist round about us crept,
And, morning-kissed,
See how they glisten, decked with many a gem,
Each strand a jewelled rope.
The world seems full of them,
Clinging to bush and fence and grassy stem.

M. O. Poynter

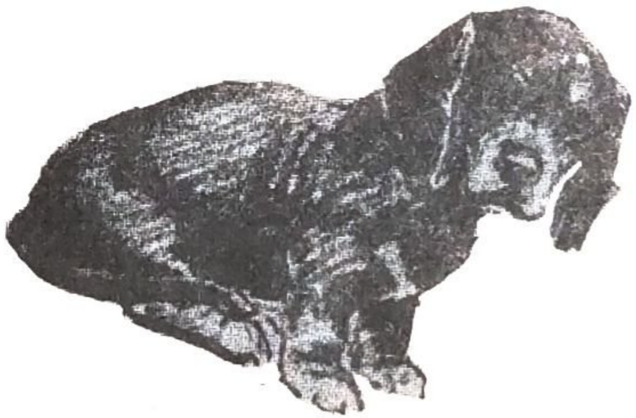


15 LONE DOG

I'm a lean dog, a keen dog, a wild dog, and lone;
I'm a rough dog, a tough dog, hunting on my own;
I'm a bad dog, a mad dog, teasing silly sheep;
I love to sit and bay the moon, to keep fat souls
from sleep.
I'll never be a lap dog, licking dirty feet,
A sleek dog, a meek dog, cringing for my meat;

Not for me the fireside, the well-filled plate,
But shut door, and sharp stone, and cuff, and
kick, and hate.
Not for me the other dogs, running by my side:
Some have run a short while, but none of them
would bide :
O mine is still the lone trail, the hard trail, the
best,
Wide wind, and wild stars, and the hunger of
the tide.

Irene R. Mcleod



16 CAT !

Cat !
Scat !
Atter, atter,
Sleekly, flatterer,
Spitfire, chatterer,
Scatter her, scatter her,
Off her mat !

Wuff !
Wuff !
Treat her rough !

Git her, git her,
Whiskery spitter !
Catch her, catch her,
Green-eyed scratches !

Slathery
Slithery
Hisser,
Don't miss her !
Run till you're dithery
Hithery
Thithery
'Pfitts ! Pfitts !
How she spits !
Spitch ! Spatch !
Can't she scratch,
Scritching the bark,
Of the sycamore-tree,
She's reached her oak,
And's hissing at *me*.
"Pfitts ! Pfitts !'

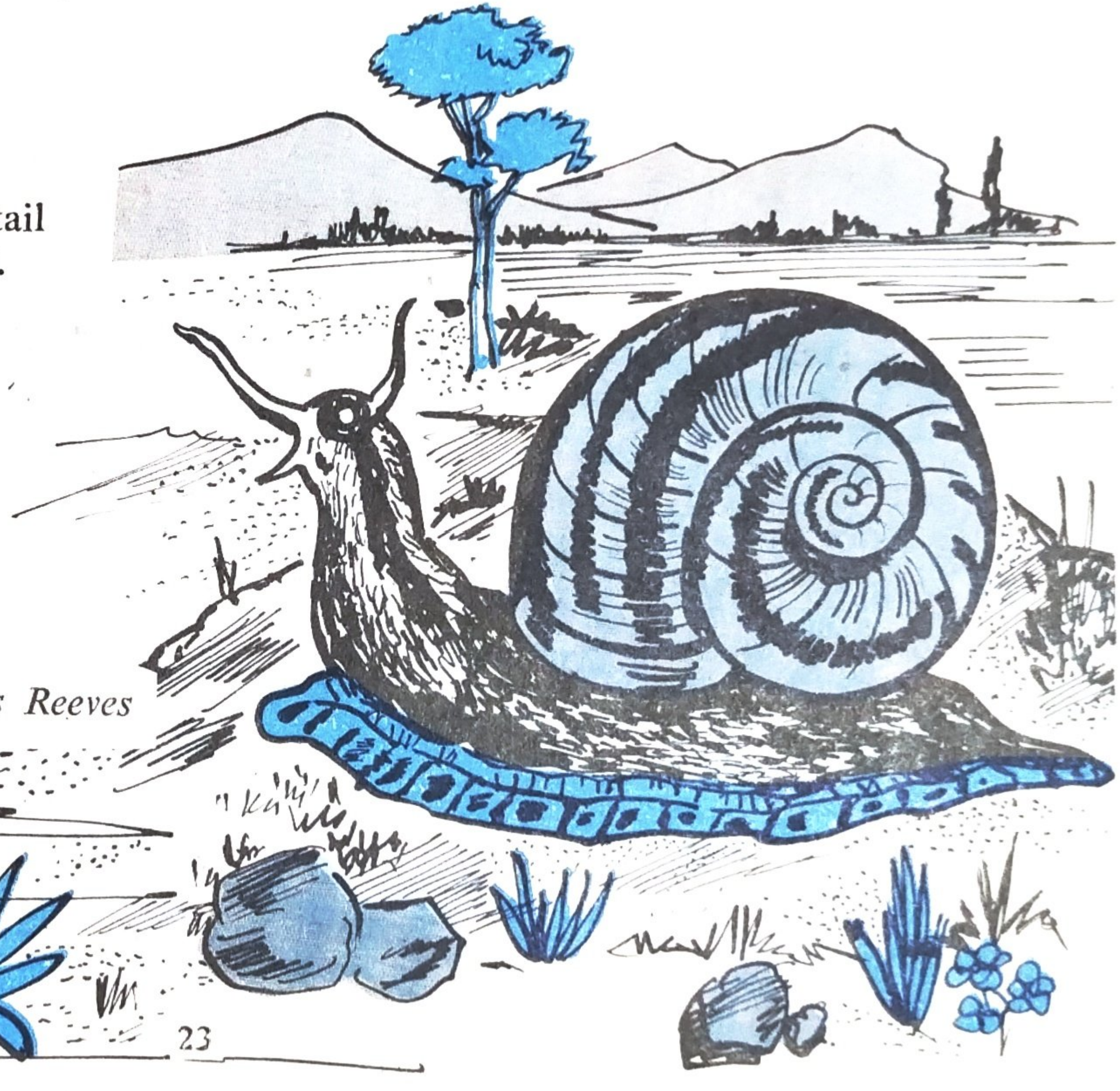
Wuff ! Wuff !
Scat,
Cat
That's
That.



17 THE SNAIL

At sunset, when the night-dews fall,
Out of the ivy on the wall
With horns outstretched and pointed tail
Comes the grey and noiseless snail.
On ivy stems she clambers down,
Carrying her house of brown
Safe in the dark, no greedy eye
Can her tender body spy,
While she herself, a hungry thief,
Searches out the freshest leaf.
She travels on as best she can
Like a toppling caravan.

James Reeves





18 THE SNAIL, THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

A snail once to a tortoise said :
  'What is your speed per hour ?'
The tortoise answered : 'Oh, not much,
  I'm but one tortoise-power.'

'But didn't you,' the snail remarked,
  'Once beat the nimble hare ?'
'Not I !' this modest tortoise said,
  'Great grand-pa was there.'
'You see, the hare went off to sleep
  When grand-papa was gone;
And while the hare slept, our old man
  Just kept on going on.'
'I see,' the snail at length replied,
  'I always thought it queer.
D'you think if I tried such a race,
  I need have any fear ?'
The tortoise smiled and shook his head;
  'The times have vastly changed,
(Great grand-pa had a lot of luck),
  Things are now not so arranged,
That crowds of sporting folks would come,
  And keep the hare awake;
So what a toil 't would be for you,
  What strides you'd have to take !
Besides, why should we nowadays
  Be proud to beat a hare ?
We're more distinguished as we are—
  Slow motion's now so rare !'

19 THE FLATTERED FLYING-FISH

(Story-teller) : Said the Shark to the Flying-Fish over the phone :

(Shark) : 'Will you join me to-night ? I am dining alone.
Let me order a nice little dinner for two :
And come as you are, in your shimmering blue.'

(Story-teller) : Said the Flying-Fish :

(Fish) : 'Fancy remembering me,
And the dress that I wore at the Porpoise's tea !'

(Shark) : 'How could I forget ?'
(Story-teller) : said the Shark in his guile :
(Shark) : 'I expect you at eight :'
(Story-teller) : and rang off with a smile.

(Story-teller) : She has powdered her nose; she has put on her things;
She is off with one flap of her luminous wings.
O little one, lovely light-hearted and vain,
The moon will not shine on your beauty again.

E. V. Rieu



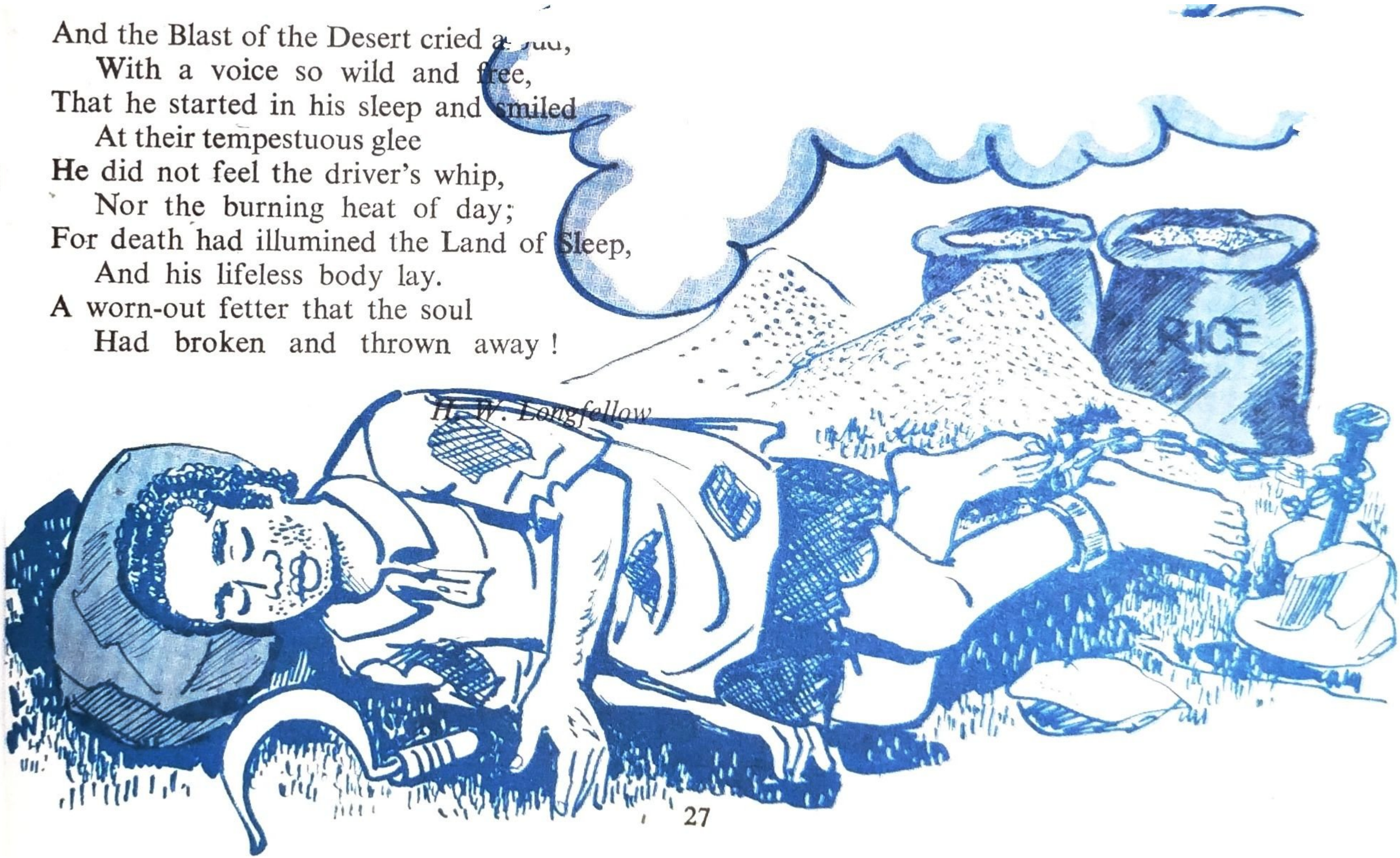
20 THE SLAVE'S DREAM

Beside the ungathered rice he lay
His sickle in his hand;
His brow was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand;
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his native land.
Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain-road.
He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand !—
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's bank;
His bridle-reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion's flank.
Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew ;
From morn till night he followed their flight.
O'er plains where the tamarind grew.
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.
At night he heard the lion roar?
And hyena scream;
And the river-horse, as crushed the reeds
Beside some hidden stream;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.
The forests with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty;

And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee
He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day;
For death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay.
A worn-out fetter that the soul
Had broken and thrown away!

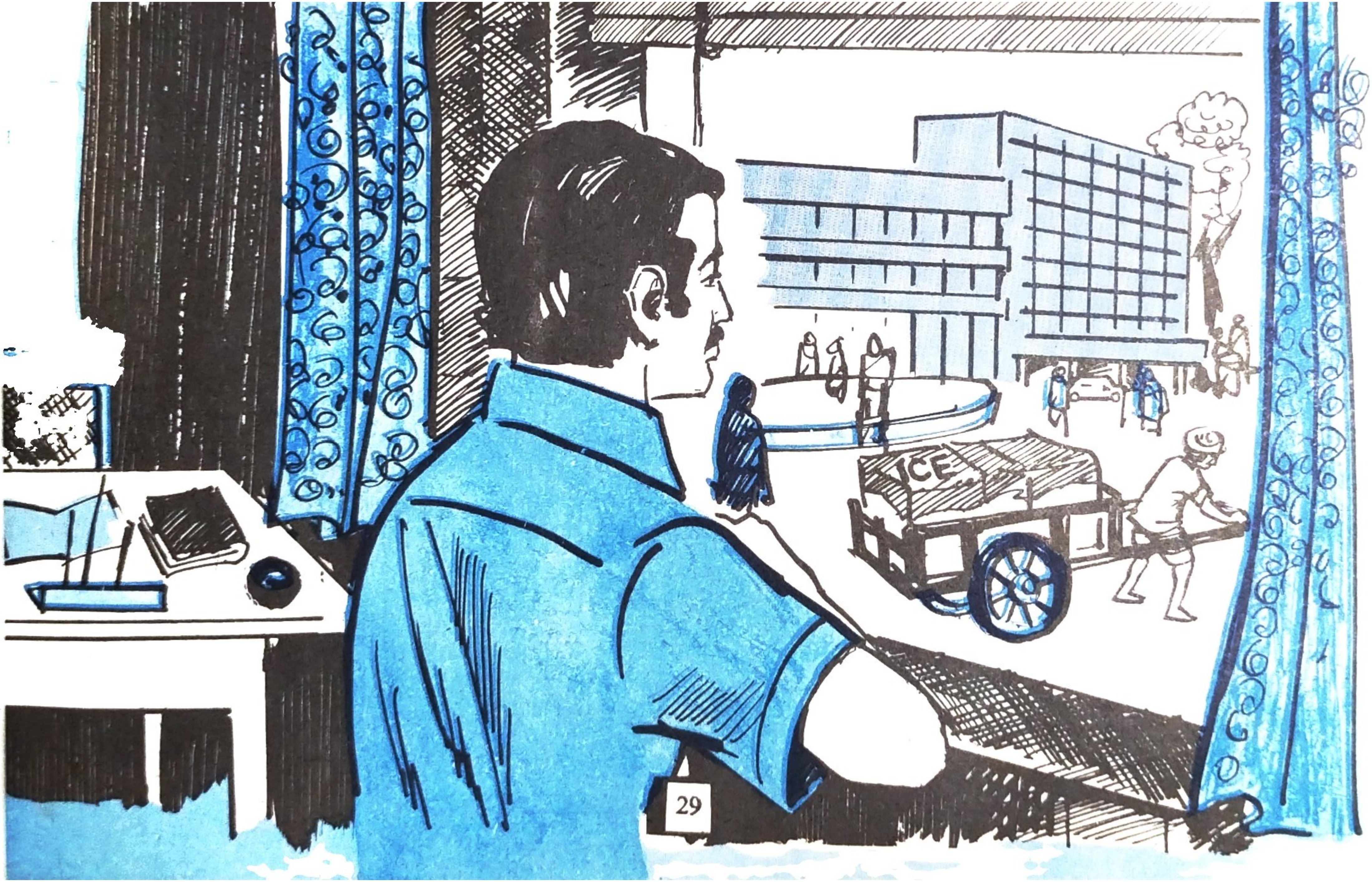
H. W. Longfellow



21 THE ICE-CART

Perched on my city office-stool
I watched with envy while a cool
And lucky carter handled ice.........
And I was wandering in a trice
Far from the grey and grimy heat
Of that intolerable street
O'er sapphire berg and emerald floe
Beneath the steel cold ruby glow
Of everlasting Polar night,
Bewildered by the queer half-light,
Until I stumbled unawares
Upon a creek where big white bears
Plunged headlong down with flourished heels
And floundered after shining seals
Through shivering seas of blinding blue.
And, as I watched them, ere I knew,
I'd stripped and I was swimming too
Among the seal-pack, young and hale,
And thrusting on with threshing tail,
With twist and twirl and sudden leap
Through cracking ice and salty deep,
Diving and doubling with my kind
Until at last we left behind
Those big white blundering bulks of death,
And lay at length with panting breath
Upon a far untravelled floe
Beneath a gentle drift of snow—
Snow drifting gently fine and white
Out of the endless Polar night,
Falling and falling evermore
Upon that far untravelled shore
Till I was buried fathoms deep
Beneath that cold white drifting sleep—
Sleep drifting deep,
Deep drifting sleep........
The carter cracked a sudden whip;
I clutched my stool with startled grip,
Awakening to the grimy heat
Of that intolerable street.

Wilfred Gibson


ICE

22 LOBSTER STEW

Last night I supped on lobster stew,
And later when I slept I knew
A curious sort of lunatic zoo,
And I will grieve
If you won't believe
The things I saw the animals do.



I saw a pig that squeaked like a parrot;
And a crocodile gnawing a heliotrope carrot.
And I saw a rhinoceros nibbling a cheese.
And a tiger nursing a hive of bees.
And a cow wearing a dog's muzzle
Trying to work out a crossword puzzle;

And an elephant whom they said was drunk
Scratching his name on a tree with his trunk.
And I saw a mouse's nose was blue
Twisting the tail of a kangaroo;
And a green, pink-eared angora rabbit,
Gathering plums in a riding-habit.

All the animals that were in the Noah's Ark
I saw in that zoo,
When I slept in the dark,
Doing things that Noah's animals did not do
After my supper of Lobser Stew.

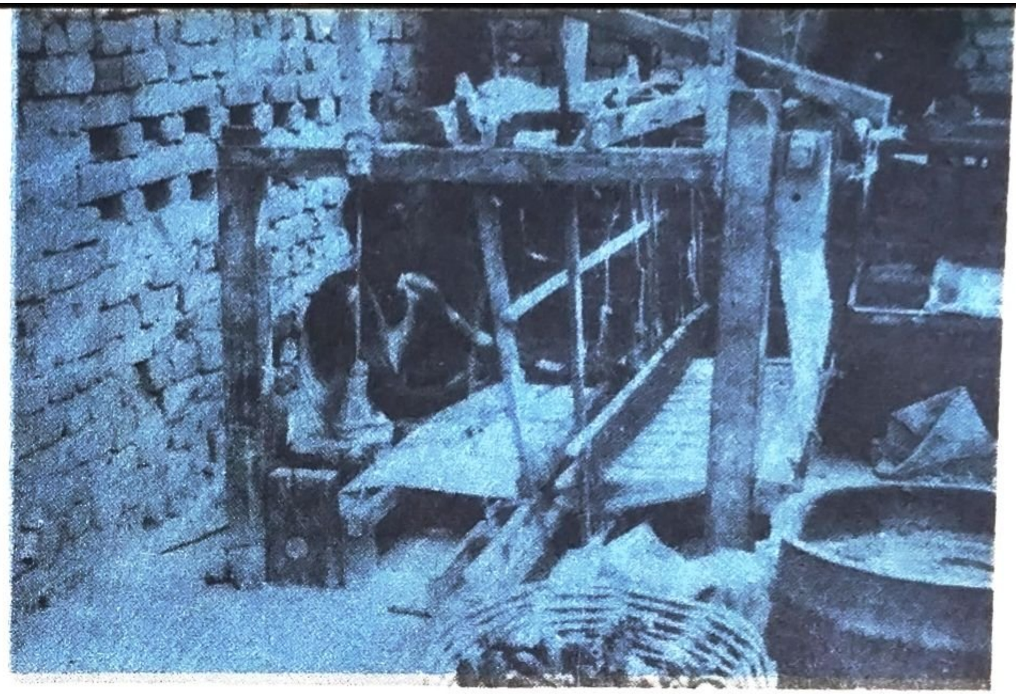
Alan Mi...

23 A WORD

A word is dead
 when it is said,
Some say.
 I say it just
Begins to live
 That day.

Emily Dickinson





24 INDIAN WEAVERS

Weavers, weaving at break of day,
 Why do you weave a garment so gay?
Blue as the wing of a halcyon[1] wild,
 We weave the robes of a new-born child.

Weavers, weaving at fall of night,
 Why do you weave a garment so bright?
Like the plumes of a peacock, purple and green,
 We weave the marriage-veils of a queen.

Sarojini Naidu





25 THOUGHTS

Thoughts are sometimes deep and pure,
Thoughts are something which one can't cure.

Thoughts are always in my mind
Struggling to get past and a new place to find.

Happy thoughts are like **balloons** in the air
To do what they like 'cause thoughts one can't tear.

They excite me all day and I bubble with joy
If I were a child, it would be more than a toy.

The thoughts which are overflowing with spite
Are like little devils come to dim one's light,

Sad thoughts cause a darkness to fall
On all the gay happenings which the day did call

26 BISHOP HATTO

The summer and autumn had been so wet,
That in winter the corn was growing yet,
'Twas a piteous sight to see all around
The grain lie rotting on the ground.

Every day the starving poor
Crowded around Bishop Hatto's door,
For he had a plentiful last-year's store.
And all the neighbourhood could tell
His granaries were furnish'd well.

At last Bishop Hatto appointed a day
To quiet the poor without delay;
He bade them to his great barn repair,
And they should have food for the winter there.

Rejoiced such tidings good to hear;
The poor folk flock'd from far and near;
The great barn was full as it could hold
Of women and children, and young and old.

Then when he saw it could hold no more,
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door;
And while for mercy on Christ they call,
He set fire to the barn and burnt them all.

'In faith 'tis an excellent bonfire !' quoth he,
'And the country is greatly obliged to me,

For ridding it in these times forlorn
Of rats that only consume the corn.

So then to his palace returned he,
And he set down to supper merrily,
And he slept that night like an innocent man :
But Bishop Hatto never slept again.

In the morning as he entered the hall
Where his picture hung against the wall,
A sweat like death all over him came,
For the rats had eaten it out of the frame.

As he look'd there came a man from his farm—
He had a countenance white with alarm;

'My Lord, I open'd your granaries this morn,
And the rats had eaten all your corn.'

Another came running presently,
And he was pale as pale could be,
'Fly! my Lord Bishop, fly,' quoth he,
'Ten thousand rats are coming this way,. . .
The Lord forgive you for yesterday !'

'I'll go to my tower on the Rhine,' replied he,
'Tis the safest place in Germany;
The walls are high and the shores are steep,
And the stream is strong and the water deep.'

Bishop Hatto fearfully hasten'd away,
And he cross'd the Rhine without delay,

And reach'd his tower, and barr'd with care
All the windows, doors, and loopholes there.

He laid him down and closed his eyes,
But soon a scream made him arise;
He startled and saw two eyes of flame
On his pillow from whence the screaming came.

He listen'd and look'd; it was only the cat;
But the Bishop he grew more fearful for that,
For she sat screaming, mad with fear,
At the army of rats that was drawing near.

For they have swum over the river so deep,
And they have climb'd the shores too steep,
And up the tower their way is bent,
To do the work for which they were sent.

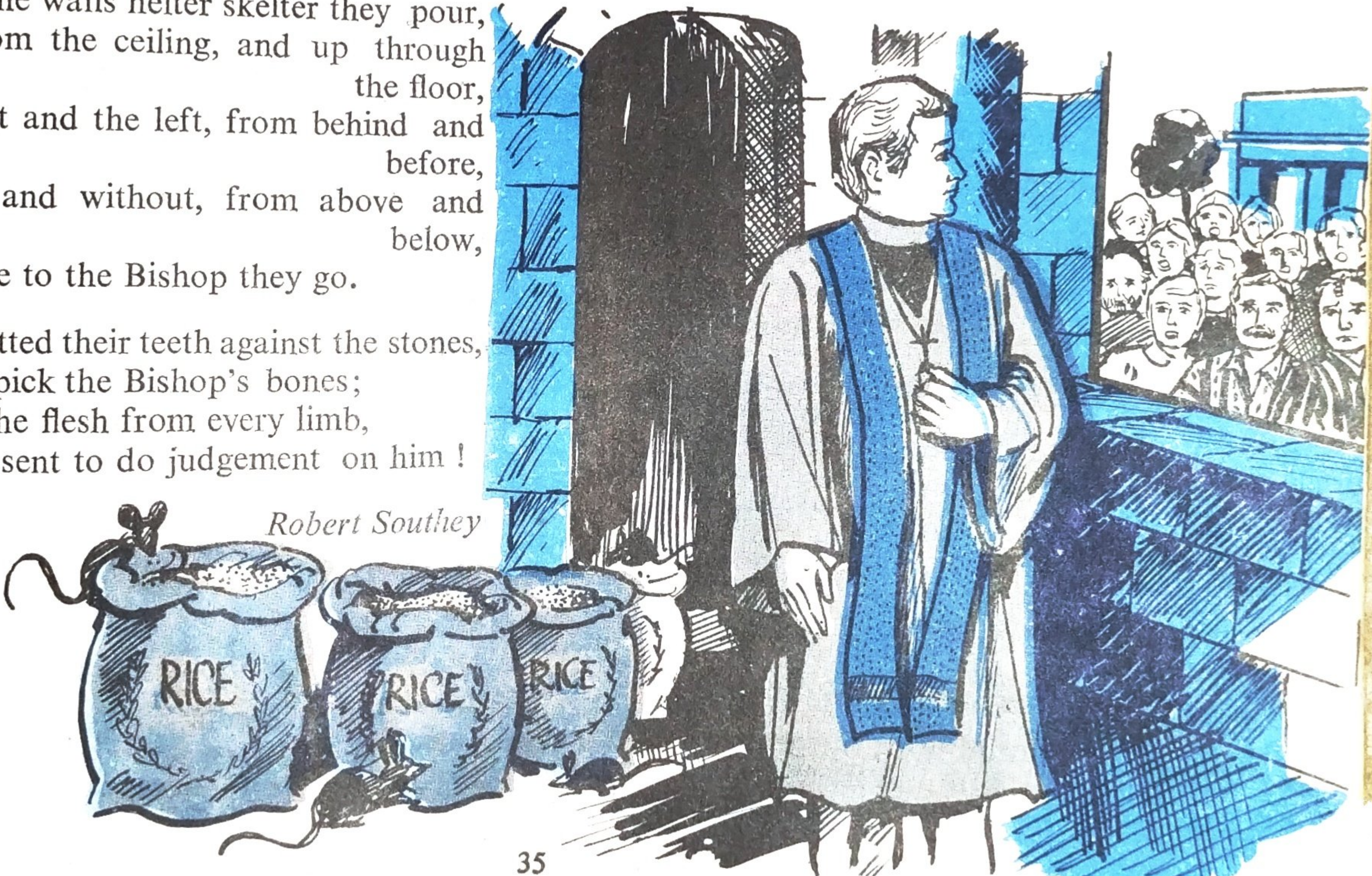
They are not to be told by the dozen or score,
By thousands they come, and by myriads and more,
Such numbers had never been heard of before.
Such a judgement had never been witness'd of yore.

Down on his knees the Bishop fell,
And faster and faster his beads did he tell,
And louder and louder drawing near
The gnawing of their teeth he could hear.

And in at the windows, and in at the door,
And through the walls helter skelter they pour,
And down from the ceiling, and up through the floor,
From the right and the left, from behind and before,
From within and without, from above and below,
And all at once to the Bishop they go.

They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick the Bishop's bones;
They gnaw'd the flesh from every limb,
For they were sent to do judgement on him!

Robert Southey



27 BREATHLESS

(Written at 21,000 feet a.s.l. on 23 May, 1953. The writer was a member of the successful 1953 Everest expedition, two members of which reached the summit. The poem comes from 'South Col', Mr. Noyce's book on his experiences.)

Heart aches,
Lungs pant
The dry air
Sorry, scant.
Legs lift
And why at all ?
Loose adrift,
Heavy fall.
Prod the snow
Its easiest way;
A flat step
Is holiday.
Look up,
The far stone

Must look up,
Glasses are dim.
Wrench of hand
Is breathless limb.
Pause one step,
Breathe swings back;
Swallow once,
Dry throat is slack.
Then on
To the far stone;
Don't look up,
Count the steps done.
One step,
One-heart-beat,



Is many miles
Far and alone.
Grind the breath
Once more and on;
Don't look up
Till journey's done.

Stone no nearer
Dragging feet.
Heart aches,
Lungs pant
The dry air
Sorry, scant.

Wilfred Noyce

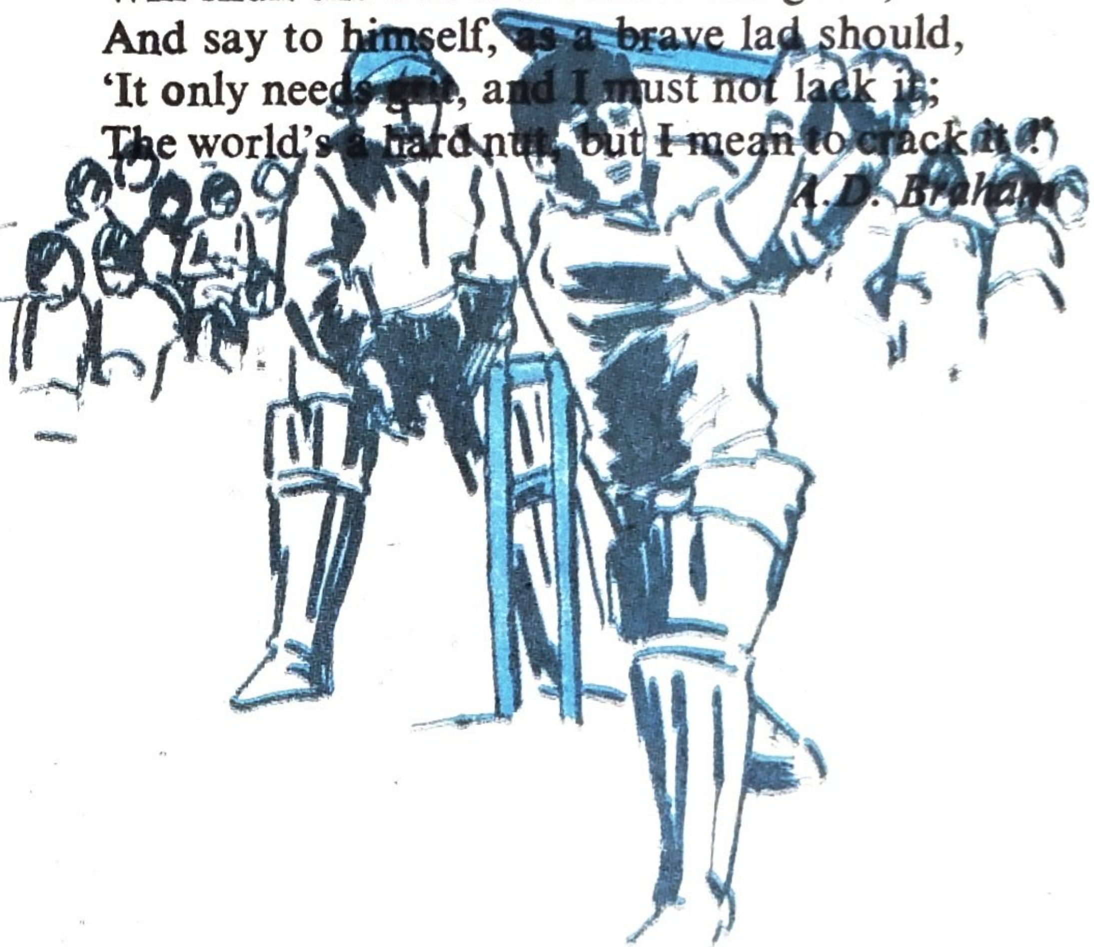
28 THE SPORTSMAN

The road was hilly, the wind was strong,
The laddie gallantly struggled along,
With never a glance at the downward way
Where his comrades shouted and laughed in play.
Though he longed to be there and join the sport,
In his brave little heart he crushed the thought,
'If I went,' he said, 'I should certainly rue it,
When you've promised a thing, you're bound
to do it.'

The pitch was slippy, the bowling hard,
A weary batsman stood on guard,
He'd come to the field with an aching head,
But the game depended on him, they said.
The sun burned hot on his tired back,
And just for a moment he thought he'd slack,
He was sorely tempted to lose a wicket :
'Twould be easy,' he thought, 'but it wouldn't
be cricket !'

In life sometimes things won't go well,
And 'Duty's' a difficult word to spell,
But the fellow who sets before his eyes
A high ideal as the worthiest prize
Will shun the evil and follow the good,
And say to himself, as a brave lad should,
'It only needs grit, and I must not lack it;
The world's a hard nut, but I mean to crack it !'

A. D. Braham



29 THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

(an extract)

[The townsfolk of Hamelin were troubled with rats. One day a Piper dressed in strange clothes appeared. He said he could charm away all the rats with his magic pipe. He was promised a large sum of money to rid the town of rats; and so he commenced his task. . .]

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the house the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,

Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser
Wherein all plunged and perished
—Save one who, stout as Julius Caesar
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary.

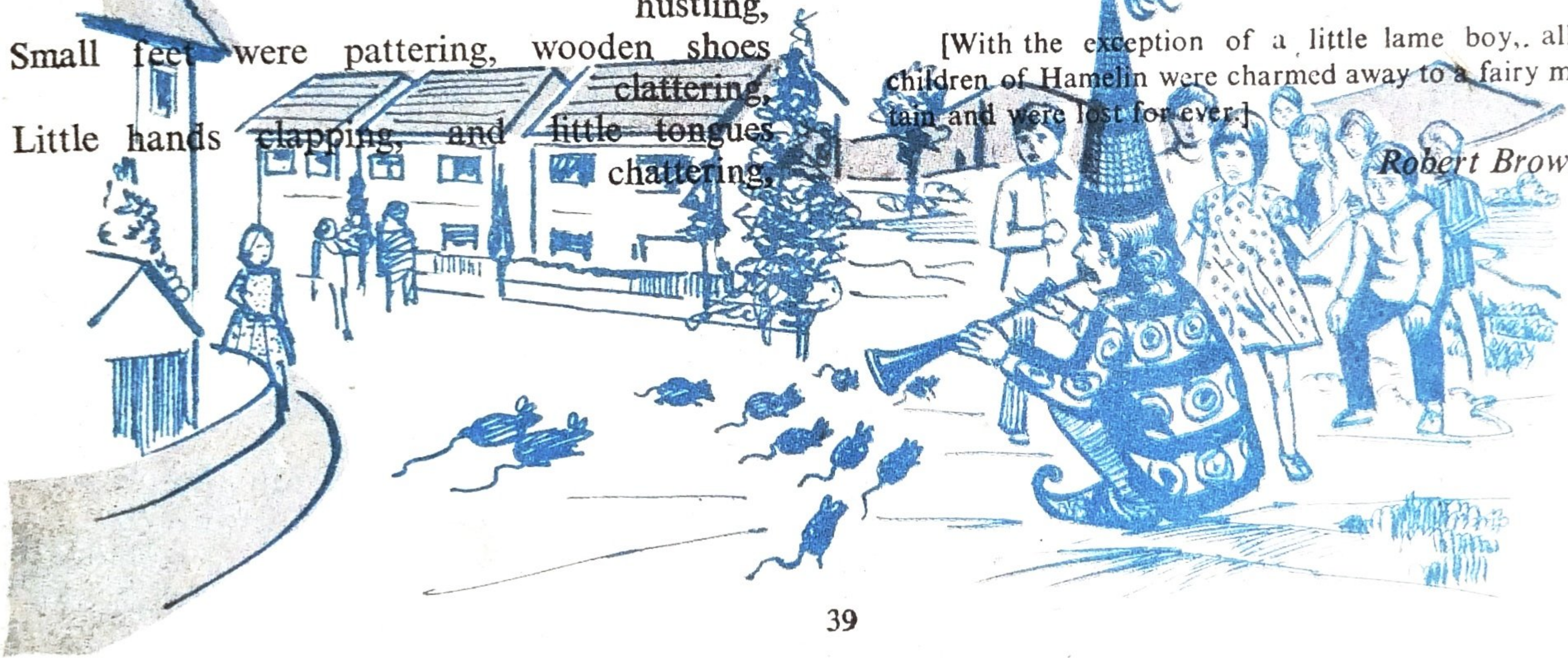
[The task completed the piper asked for his payment. The greedy councillors broke their promise and would not pay him his money, so. . .]

60 E Band C

Once more he stept into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth, straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air).
There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

[With the exception of a little lame boy,. all the children of Hamelin were charmed away to a fairy mountain and were lost for ever.]

Robert Browning



30 AN ELEPHANT SAVES THE FLAG

Long, long ago, on India's plains,
    There raged a battle fierce and strong;
The din of musketry was heard,
    And cannon's roar was loud and long.
Old Hero marched with stately tread
    His part to act in the affray;
And on his back above all heads
    The royal ensign waved that day.

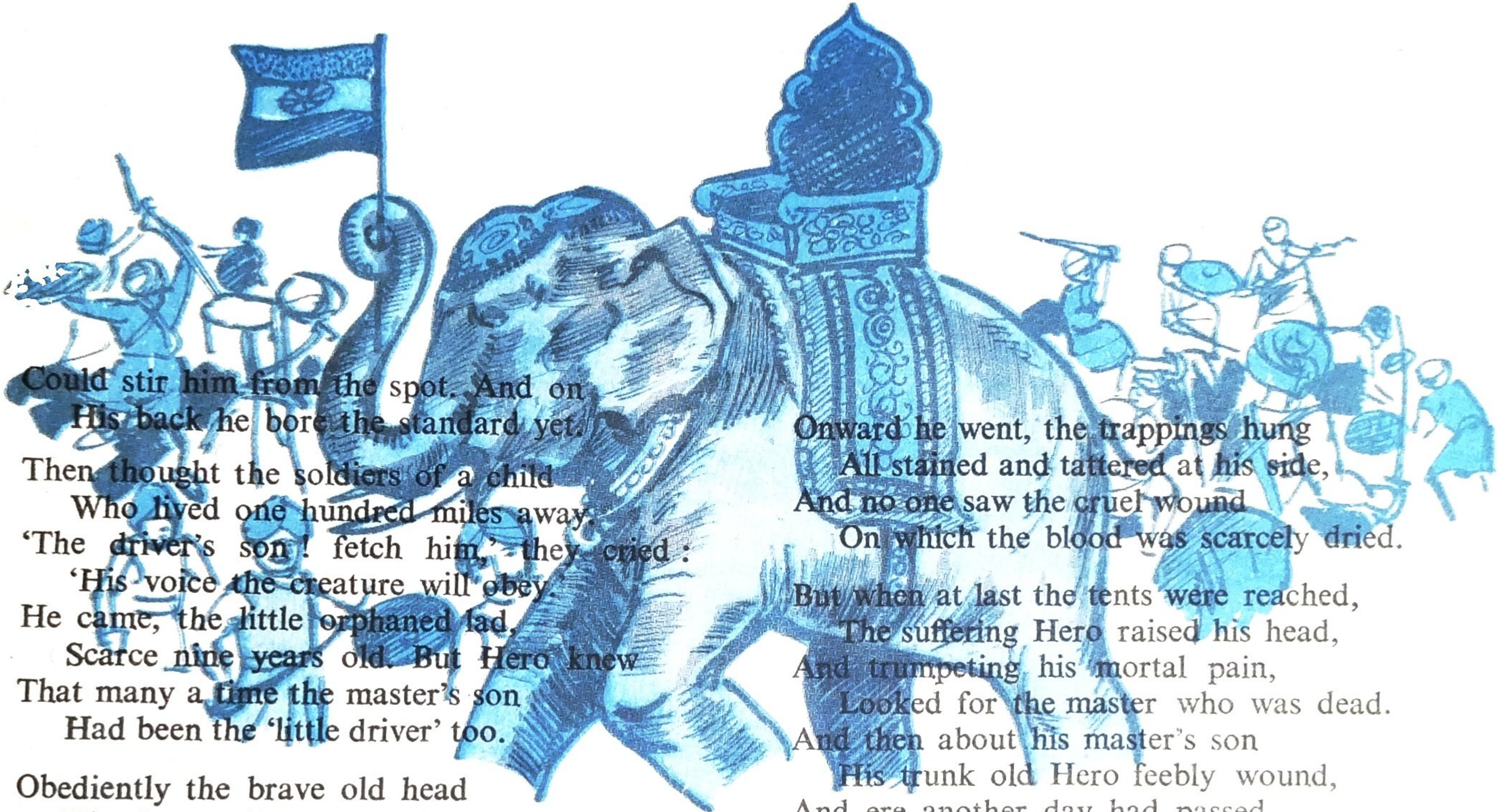
Fondly the soldiers viewed their flag,
    Which shook its colours to the air,

Proudly the driver rode, and sent
    His watchful gaze now here, now there.
Till 'Halt !' he cried; and Hero heard,
    And instantly the word obeyed,
When, lo ! a flash, a shriek and then
    His driver with the slain was laid.

Oh, fierce and hot the conflict grew :
    Yet patiently old Hero stood
Amidst it all, the while his feet
    Were stained, alas ! with human blood
His ears were strained, to catch the voice
    Which only could his steps command,
Nor would he turn when men grew weak,
    And panic spread on either hand.

But yet the standard waved aloft;
    The fleeing soldiers saw it. Lo
'We are not conquered yet', they cried.
    And rallying closed upon the foe.
Then turned the tide of conquest, and
    The royal ensign waved at last
Victorious o'er the blood-stained field,
    Just as the weary day was past.

Yet waited Hero for the word
    Of him whose sole command he knew—
Waited, nor moved one ponderous foot,
    To his own captain's orders true.
Three lonely nights, three lonely days,
    Poor Hero 'Halted'. Bribe nor threat



Could stir him from the spot. And on
His back he bore the standard yet.

Then thought the soldiers of a child
Who lived one hundred miles away.
'The driver's son! fetch him,' they cried:
'His voice the creature will obey.'
He came, the little orphaned lad,
Scarce nine years old. But Hero knew
That many a time the master's son
Had been the 'little driver' too.

Obediently the brave old head
Was bowed before the child, and then,
With one long wistful glance around,
Old Hero's march began again.

Onward he went, the trappings hung
All stained and tattered at his side,
And no one saw the cruel wound
On which the blood was scarcely dried.

But when at last the tents were reached,
The suffering Hero raised his head,
And trumpeting his mortal pain,
Looked for the master who was dead.
And then about his master's son
His trunk old Hero feebly wound,
And ere another day had passed,
A soldier's honoured grave had found.

Mary D Brine

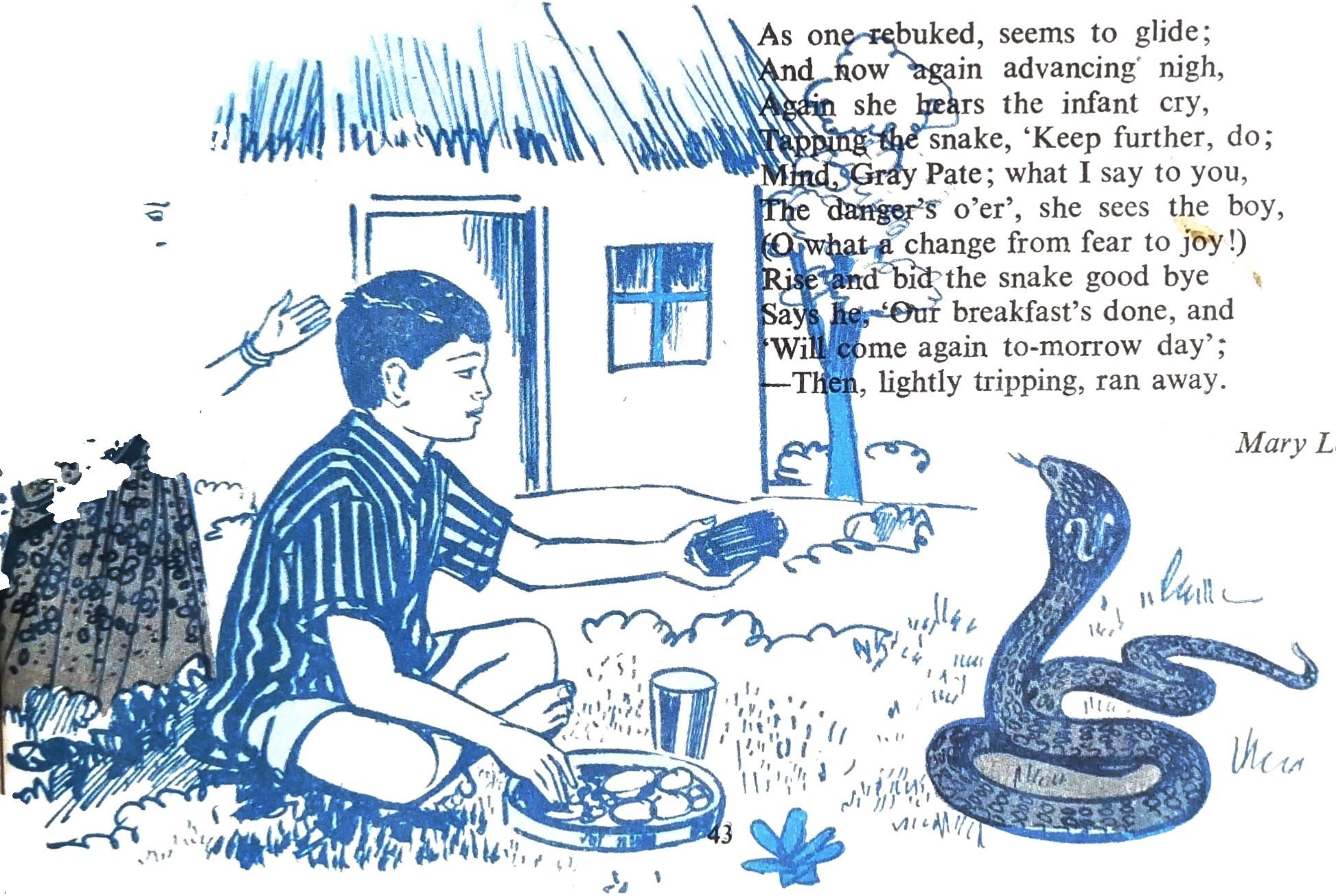
31 THE CHILD AND THE SNAKE

Henry was every morning fed
With a full ness of milk and bread.
One day the boy his breakfast took,
And ate it by a purling brook.
His mother lets him have his way.
With free leave Henry every day
Thither repairs, until she heard
Him talking of a fine gray bird.
This pretty bird, he said, indeed,
Came every day, with him to feed;
And it loved him and loved his milk
And it was smooth and soft like silk.
—On the next morn she follows Henry,
And carefully she sees him carry.
Through the long grass his heap'd-up mess.
What was her terror and distress,
When she saw the infant take
His bread and milk close to a snake!
Upon the grass he spreads his feast,
And sits down by his frightful guest,
Who had waited for the treat,
And now they both begin to eat.
Fond mother! shriek not; O beware
The least small noise, O have a care-
The least small noise that may be made
The wily snake will be afraid—
If he hear the slightest sound,

He will inflict th' envenom'd wound.
—She speaks not, moves not, scarce does brea:
As she stands the trees beneath.
No sound she utters; and she soon
Sees the child lift up his spoon.
And tap the snake upon the head
Fearless of harm; and then he said,
As speaking to a familiar mate,
'Keep on your own side, do, Gray Pate';
The snake then to the other side,

As one rebuked, seems to glide;
And now again advancing nigh,
Again she hears the infant cry,
Tapping the snake, 'Keep further, do;
Mind, Gray Pate; what I say to you,
The danger's o'er', she sees the boy,
(O what a change from fear to joy!)
Rise and bid the snake good bye
Says he, 'Our breakfast's done, and
'Will come again to-morrow day';
—Then, lightly tripping, ran away.

Mary Lamb



32 AN ORIENTAL LEGEND

A king, grown old in glory and renown,
With wisdom wished his happy reign to crown.
Feeling the years turn white upon his head,
He thought upon his end, and thus he said:
'Three sons I have, strong types of sturdy youth,
Bred in all honour, manliness, and truth;
Honest and brave are they, I know it well;
But traits there are in all that none can tell.
I'll test them, therefore; for I fain would know
Which one shall rule the best when I must go.'

Thereon he sent a slave to call his sons
Into his presence. Strong and manly ones
They surely were, to glad a father's sight,
And mind him of his spring-time's manly might.
To whom the king: 'My sons, the time draws near
When I, your sire, shall be no longer here,
And I would know which of you I may trust
To wield the sceptre when my hands are dust;
And to that end I make you this request,
Which of my three sons loves his father best?'

Then spake the eldest: 'Sire, my love for thee
Is deeper, broader, greater than the sea,
Vast as it is, that wets thy kingdom's shore.
Such is my love for thee, my sire, and more.'
The second then: 'My father and my king,
There is not any yet created thing
In the whole universe, below, above,
To mark the scope and measure of my love.'
The youngest simply said: 'I cannot tell
Thee more than this, I love my father well.'

The king dismissed them with a tender word,
And sat and pondered well what he had heard,
Then called his minister, and to him spake:
'My lord, a pilgrimage I fain would make
To far-famed Mecca, that I may atone
For sins unpardoned; I will go alone,
Barefooted and bareheaded; and if I

By Allah shall be called upon to die
While on this pilgrimage, 'tis my command
That my three sons together rule the land.'

A year went by, and yellow were the leaves,
The ripened grain was gathered into sheaves,
And all made ready for the harvest sport,
When through the kingdom-city, camp and court,
Seaport and hamlet-the sad news was sped,
That the wise ruler and just king was dead.
Loved as a monarch tender, brave, and true,
His people mourned him deeply as his due.
His sons were told the words the king had said,
And reigned together in their father's stead.

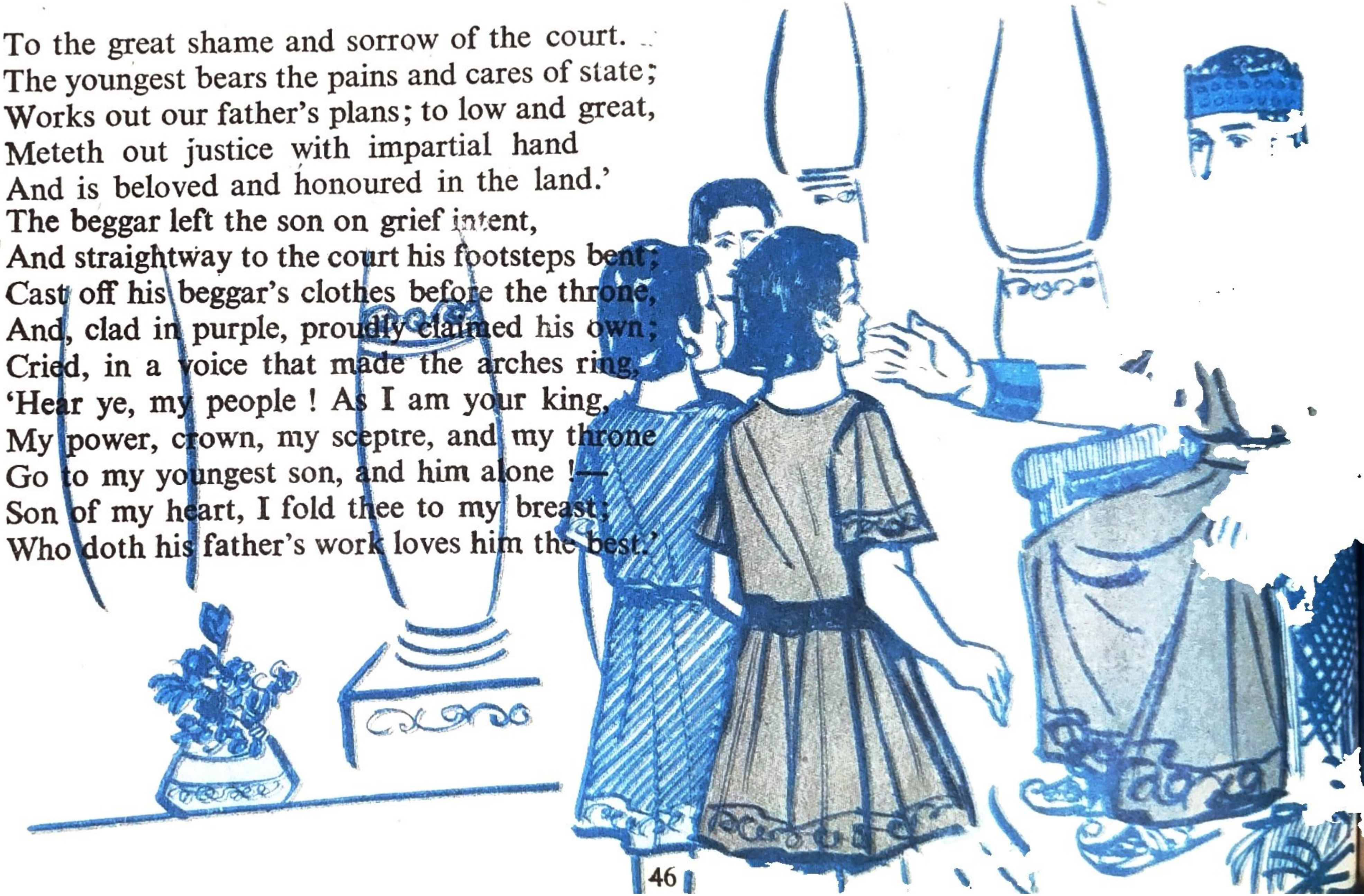
The calendar had marked another year,
And on the drooping stalk the full-grown ear
Through golden husk and silken tassel showed,
When wearily along the dusty road

A beggar slowly moved towards the town.
Outside the open gate he sat him down
And rested. Suddenly his thoughts were bent
Upon a man near by, with garments rent,
Who sighed and wept and beat upon his breast,
And ever made this moan, 'I loved him best.'

'Friend,' said the beggar, 'tell, if I may know,
What is the cause and secret of thy woe,
Allah hath certain cure for every ill;
Thine may He soften !' For a moment still
The other sat; then, with fresh tears, he said :
'Great is my loss. I mourn the king that's dead.
Ah ! never more shall men see such a one.
He was my father, I his eldest son.'
And then he beat once more upon his breast
And rent his clothes, and cried, 'I loved him best.'

The beggar sighed, 'Such love must Allah prize.
Thy brothers? mourn they also in this wise.'
'Not so,' the mourner said. 'The next in age
His grief with other thoughts did soon assuage;
With horse and hounds his hours are spent in sport,

To the great shame and sorrow of the court.
The youngest bears the pains and cares of state;
Works out our father's plans; to low and great,
Meteth out justice with impartial hand
And is beloved and honoured in the land.'
The beggar left the son on grief intent,
And straightway to the court his footsteps bent;
Cast off his beggar's clothes before the throne,
And, clad in purple, proudly claimed his own;
Cried, in a voice that made the arches ring,
'Hear ye, my people ! As I am your king,
My power, crown, my sceptre, and my throne
Go to my youngest son, and him alone !—
Son of my heart, I fold thee to my breast;
Who doth his father's work loves him the best.'





33 NOSE *VERSUS* EYES

Between Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,—
The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
To which the said spectacles ought to belong.

So Tongue was the lawyer, and argued the cause
With great deal of skill, and a wig full of learning;
While Chief Baron Ear sat to balance the laws,
So famed for his talent in nicely discerning.

'In behalf of the Nose it will quickly appear,
And your lordship,' he said, 'will undoubtedly find,
That the Nose has had spectacles always in wear,
Which amounts to possession time out of mind.'

Then holding the spectacles up to the court,
'Your lordship observes they are made with a straddle
As wide as the ridge of the Nose is; in short,
Designed to sit close to it, just like a saddle.

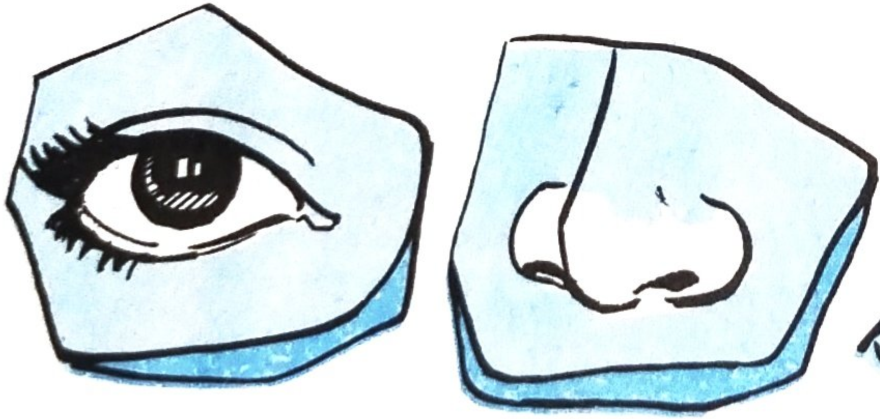
'Again would your lordship a moment suppose
('Tis a case that has happened, and may be again)
That the visage or countenance had not a Nose,
Pray who would, or who could, wear spectacles then?

'On the whole it appears, and my argument shows,
'With a reasoning the court will never condemn,
That the spectacles plainly were made for the Nose,
And the Nose was as plainly intended for them.'

Then shifting his side, as a lawyer knows how,
He pleaded again in behalf of the Eyes :
But what were his arguments few people know,
For the court did not think they were equally wise,

So his lordship decreed with a grave solemn tone,
Decisive and clear, without one *if* or *but*—
That, whenever the Nose put his spectacles on,
By daylight or candlelight—Eyes should be shut !

William Cowper





34 HALL AND KNIGHT
OR
Z+B+X=Y+B+Z

When he was young his cousins
used to say of Mr. Knight :
'This boy will write an Algebra
or looks as if he might.'

And sure enough, when Mr. Knight
had grown to be a man
He purchased pen and paper
and an inkpot, and began.

But he very soon discovered
that he couldn't write at all,
And his heart was filled with yearnings
for a certain Mr. Hall;
Till, after many years of doubt,
he sent his friend a card :
'Have tried to write an Algebra,
but find it very hard.'

Now Mr. Hall himself had tried
to write a book for schools,
But suffered from a handicap :
he didn't know the rules.
So when he heard from Mr. Knight
and understood his gist,
He answered him by telegram :
'Delighted to assist.'

So Mr. Hall and Mr. Knight
they took a house together,
And they worked away at Algebra
in any kind of weather,
Determined not give it up
until they had evolved
A problem so constructed
that it never could be solved.

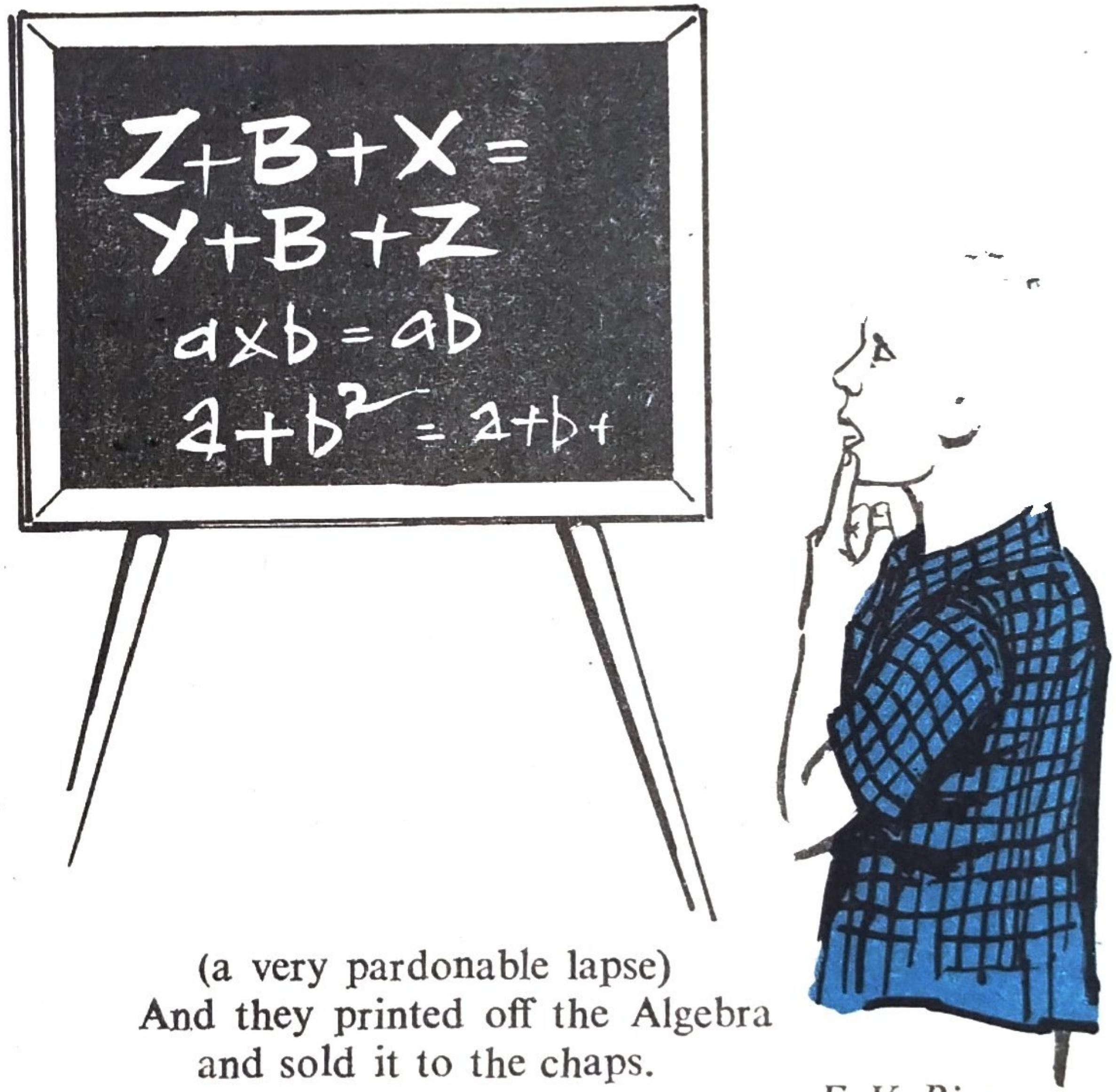
'How hard it is,' said Mr. Knight
to hide the fact from youth
That X and Y are equal

it is such an obvious truth !'
'It is,' said Mr. Hall
'but if we gave a B to each,
We'd put the problems well beyond
our little victim's reach.'

'Or are you anxious, Mr. Knight,
lest any boy should see
The utter superfluity
of this repeated B?'

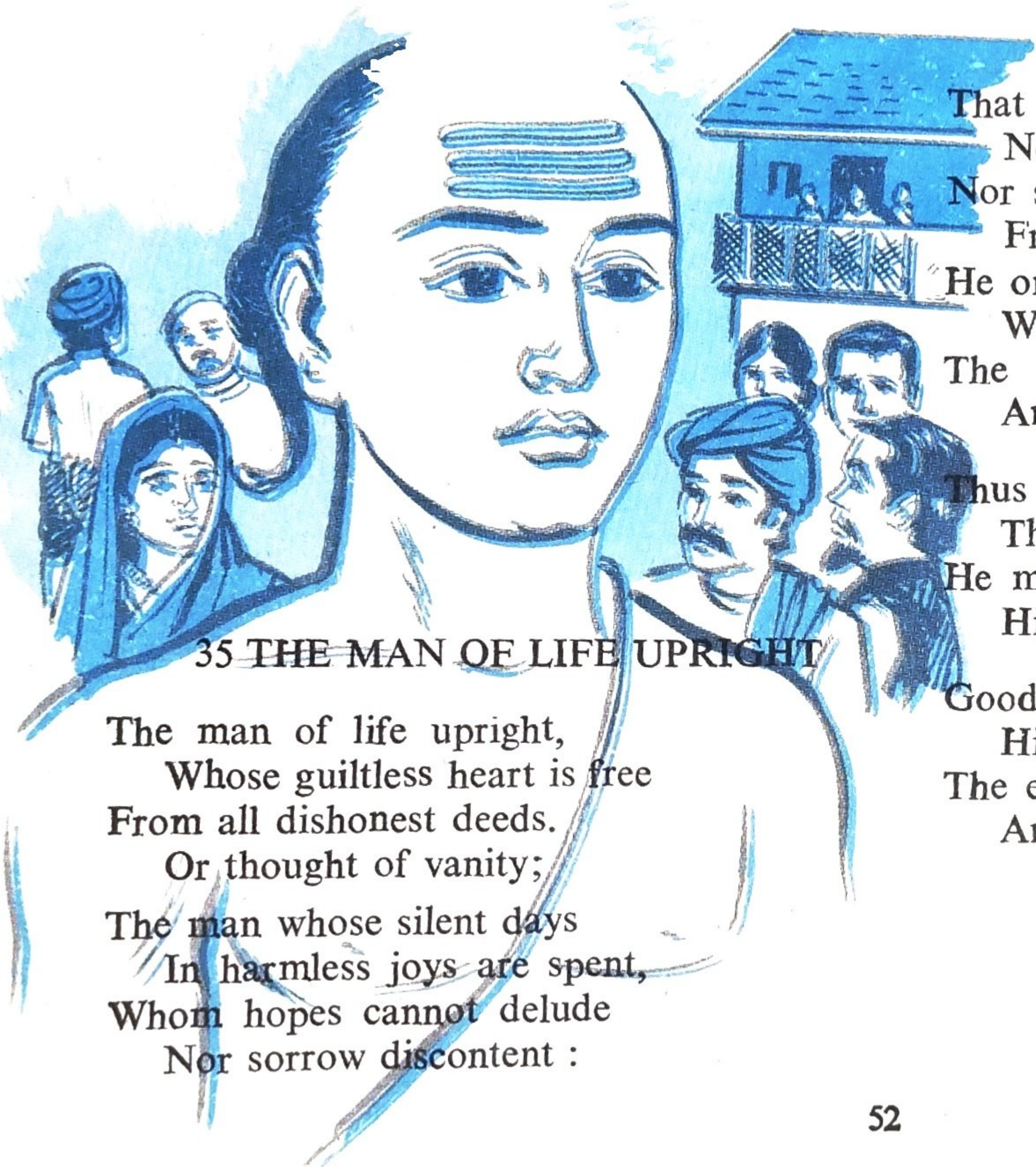
'I scarcely fear it,' he replied
and scratched his grizzled head,
'But perhaps it would be safer
if to B we added Z;'

'A brilliant stroke !' said Mr Hall
and added Z to either side;
Then looked at his accomplice
With a flush of happy pride.
And Knight, he winked at Hall



(a very pardonable lapse)
And they printed off the Algebra
and sold it to the chaps.

E. V. Rieu



35 THE MAN OF LIFE UPRIGHT

The man of life upright,
    Whose guiltless heart is free
From all dishonest deeds.
    Or thought of vanity;

The man whose silent days
    In harmless joys are spent,
Whom hopes cannot delude
    Nor sorrow discontent :

That man needs neither towers
    Nor armour for defence,
Nor secret vaults to fly
    From thunder's violence.
He only can behold
    With unaffrighted eyes
The horrors of the deep
    And terrors of the skies;

Thus scorning all the cares
    That fate or fortune brings,
He makes the heaven his book,
    His wisdom heavenly things;

Good thoughts his only friends,
    His wealth a well-spent age,
The earth his sober inn
    And quiet pilgrimage.

Thomas Campion

36 GIVE US MEN

Give us men !
Men from every rank,
Fresh and free and frank;
Men of thought and reading,
Men of light and leading,
Men of loyal breeding,
The nation's welfare speeding :
Men of faith and not of fiction,
Men of lofty aim in action,
Give us men— say again
Give us men !
Strong and stalwart ones;
Men whom highest hope inspires,
Men whom purest honour fires,
Men who trample self beneath them,
Men who make their country wreathe them
As her noble sons,
Worthy of their sires :



Men who never shame their mothers,
Men who never fail their brothers,
True however false all others,
Give us men— say again
Give us men !

Bishop of Exeter



37 FRIENDS AND FLATTERERS

Every one that flatters thee
Is no friend in misery
Words are easy, like the wind;
Faithful friends are hard to find.

Every man will be thy friend
Whilst thou hast wherewith to spend;
But if store of crowns be scant
No man shall supply thy want.

If that one be prodigal
Bountiful they will him call :
And with such like flattering,
'Pity but he were a king'.

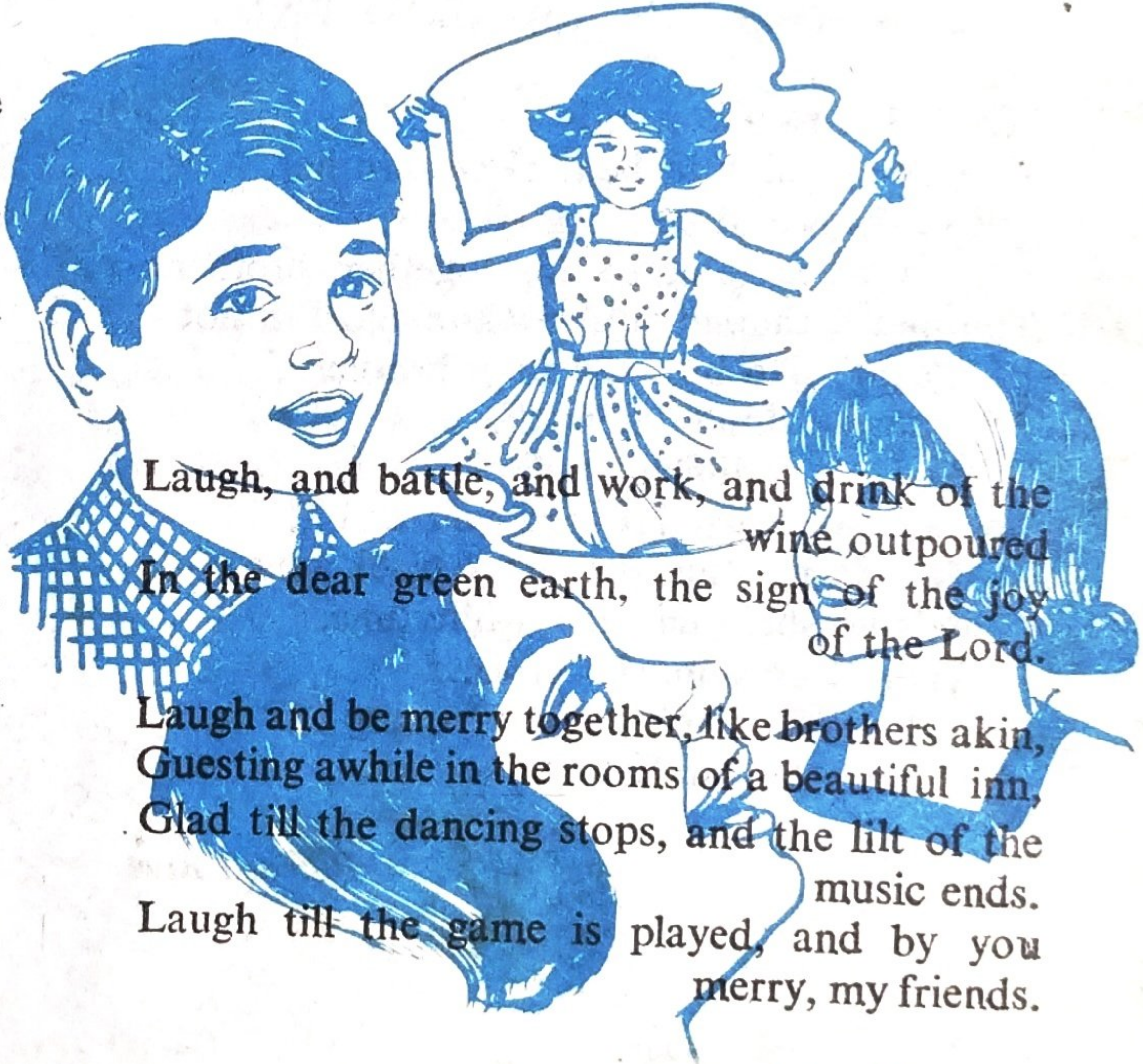
But if fortune once do frown
Then farewell his great renown :
They that fawn'd on him before
Use his company no more.

He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee in thy need;
If thou sorrow, he will weep;
If thou wake, he cannot sleep :

Thus of every grief in heart
He with thee doth bear a part,
These are certain signs to know
Faithful friend from flattering foe.

William Shakespeare

38 LAUGH AND BE MERRY



Laugh and be merry, remember, better the world with a song,
Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a wrong.
Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length of a span.
Laugh and be proud to belong to the old proud pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry : remember, in olden time,
God made Heaven and Earth for joy He took in a rhyme
Made them, and filled them full with the strong red wine of His mirth,
The splendid joy of the stars, the joy of the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue cup of the sky
Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping by,
Laugh, and battle, and work, and drink of the wine outpoured
In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of the Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin,
Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,
Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the music ends.
Laugh till the game is played, and by you merry, my friends.

John Masefield

39 WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS

Where the rainbow ends
  There's going to be a place, brother,
Where the world can sing all sort of songs,
  And we're going to sing together, brother,
You and I, though you're white and I'm not
  It's going to be a sad song brother,
Because we don't know the tune,
  And it's a difficult tune to learn.
But we can learn brother, you and I,
  There's no such tune as a black tune.
There's no such tune as a white tune,
  There's only music, brother
And it's music we're going to sing
  Where the rainbow ends.

Richard Rive



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